

Arsenal receives official designation as 'Center for Technical and Industrial' excellence

by Rachel Newton

Pine Bluff Arsenal was designated in September by the Department of the Army as a Center of Industrial and Technical Excellence (CITE) for chemical and biological defense equipment.

Under this designation, PBA will be allowed, as a working capital-funded activity, to manufacture or remanufacture, and sell products and services to other government agencies and the private sector.

"This designation officially recognizes that the Arsenal does have an extensive mission and has the capability of performing depot-level maintenance on chemical and biological defense equipment," said Larry Wright, PBA civilian executive. "Not only are we a manufacturing arsenal, we are a maintenance depot too."

Wright said that the designation will allow a vast market potential to open up for the Arsenal. "This is significant because we believe that the CITE designation will allow us to evolve into a true joint and interagency full-spectrum logistics platform," he said. "We will be positioned to serve not only the war fighter, but national homeland defense efforts, as well as the commercial sector."

According to Wright, this designation will enhance PBA's core competency in chemical-biological defense by promoting partnerships and supplementing the overall workload.

"It will allow PBA to be more competitive," said Wright.

Future opportunities in the area of homeland security will also be more abundant under this CITE designation because it is more broad than the Arsenal Support Program Initiative (ASPI). ASPI is strictly a landlord-tenant authority, whereas, the CITE statutory authority allows for the sale of services and products.

"PBA will be positioned to become the system contractor of choice when it comes to combating weapons of mass destruction," he said. "It will open the doors to many more opportunities in the chemical defense area. It is a widely recognized credential."

The designation, which came out of a Congressional defense authorization bill approved in May, urged the Army to consider PBA as the only center with these capabilities.

"It makes the Pine Bluff Arsenal look more attractive in the long term to folks at the Pentagon," said Arkansas congressman Rep. Mike Ross of Prescott in a May 27 story in the *Pine Bluff Commercial*. "Not only are they providing an important mission for our military, this will help offset the cost of what they do by picking up some private-sector work."

Ross along with Arkansas congressman Vic Snyder of Little Rock, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, inserted the provision into the defense bill.

"This is tremendous news for the Arsenal and all the hard working families in Pine Bluff, White Hall and Southeast Arkansas," said Ross. "The CITE designation will make the Arsenal the preferred site for production, storage, and maintenance of chemical and biological defense equipment."

PBA already has current partnerships with the private sector.

Ohio-based Battelle Memorial Institute leases PBA laboratory space and tests protective clothing resistance to chemical penetration.

Maryland-based General Physics Corp. has operations affiliated with the Department of Homeland Security where mobile teams of instructors are dispatched nationwide from the Arsenal to train first responders.